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Book reviews and notices

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Abstract — Books reviewed include Guide to the common fungi of the semiarid region of Brazil by Neves, Baseia, Drechsler-Santos, & Góes-Neto and Ascomycete fungi of North America by Beug, Bessette, & Bessette.

Ascomycete fungi of North America. A mushroom reference guide. By M.W. Beug, A.E. Bessette & A.R. Bessette. 2014. University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819. <info@utpress.utexas.edu>. ISBN 978-0-292-75452-2. Pp 488, 800 color photos. Price $85.00 [$56.95 33% website discount price]

This is the first guidebook on ascomycetes for North America. Regional guidebooks often contain the most conspicuous and edible species, but here, an attempt is made to cover the larger species and touch on the smaller more inconspicuous taxa. Around 600 species are mentioned in the text, with part of these fully described and illustrated.

The book starts out with a short introduction to the *Ascomycetes* (excluding the lichenized taxa), illustrated with photos of microscopical structures.

The key, which follows, is special, as it combines written couplets with choices of fruitbody photos to get to species. The truffle species can be keyed out with a dichotomous key as well. The emphasis is on macroscopical and habitat-related characters.

The next 370 pages contain the species descriptions and photos, arranged by group, starting out with the artificial group of hypogeous species, followed by the classes (*Pezizomycetes, Sordariomycetes, Leotiomycetes, Eurotiomycetes, Neolectomycetes, Orbiliomycetes, Dothideomycetes*, and *Taphrinomycetes*)

* Books for consideration for coverage in this column should be mailed to the Book Review Editor at the address above. All unsigned entries are by the Book Review Editor.

to which the treated species belong. The *Geoglossaceae* (here still including *Microglossum*) are treated separately as well.

A glossary, list of references, photo credits, and indices fill the last 34 pages.

Each species gets one or two pages — one sizeable photo, usually taken in situ, without scale bar — plus a standard description and discussion. The microscopic features are not depicted, just described. The emphasis is on the larger showier species, with the *Pezizomycetes* represented by a relatively high number of species.

The quality of the photos is variable, from very beautiful to uninformative (*Lasiosphaeria spermoides* looks like a black blob without any detail).

The discussions give a huge amount of information from the literature and cover the new developments and discoveries made in the molecular age.

It is great that there is now a book on ascomycetes for North America, and I hope that it will open the eyes of many amateur mycologists to the world of ascos beyond the edible morels.

On the minus-side, this book does not make it possible to identify every ascomycete in North America — far from it.

The coverage of species with fruitbodies <0.5 cm is very limited (e.g., only two species of *Hymenoscyphus* are included), and only a few species are represented for many genera (the under-studied genus *Mollisia* is represented by *M. cinerea,* even though the genus is species rich). In many genera, species concepts are very much in flux, and unfortunately European names are still used for American species: for instance, *Verpa conica* and *Sarcosphaera coronaria* are used, despite the fact that the western North American species differ from the European ones under those names.

The book is available with 33% discount from the University of Texas Press web site, which makes it very affordable. Its weight and size do not make it a book to take out in the field.

In short — this book fills a gap, but it should be accompanied by much more in-depth treatments of the groups in question. I hope that there soon will be follow-up publications that will focus on the smaller, less conspicuous ascomycetes.

Guide to the common fungi of the semiarid region of Brazil. By M.A. Neves, I. Goulart Baseia, E.R. Drechsler-Santos & A. Góes-Neto (eds). 2013. TECC Editora, Rua João Pio Duarte Silva 602, Apto. 302 Bloco A, Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. <info@tecceditora.com>. ISBN 978-85-65005-03-6, 132 pages, numerous photos and line drawings. Price $34.95

I am always thrilled to see the publication of mushroom field guides for regions where not a single illustrated book to identify fungi has been available.

This little book acquaints us with the fungi of the drier, inland regions of northeastern Brazil, and starts out with a nice introduction to the area, its landscapes and vegetation types, followed by an overview of what fungi are.

The next 100 pages are filled with keys to, and photos and descriptions (in English and in Portuguese) of, around 80 species, arranged by systematic and morphological groups. A small spore drawing is given for each species as well. The last 20 pages contain the glossary, references, photo credits, and short blurbs about the editors. A total of seventeen authors contributed to this book.

The Brazilian guide differs from others of its kind in that the gilled mushroom section is not the biggest of the book; equal space is devoted to the polypores and the various kinds of gasteromycetes. Photos of *Abrachium floriforme* and *Clathrus cristatus* provide the 'wow' factor.

Many photos look slightly faint, which may be a result of the production process.

I hope that this book will stimulate the investigation of the natural world within Brazil, and entice foreign and Brazilian mycologists to keep adding to the knowledge of fungi in Brazil, and especially to the dispersal of the knowledge of these organisms.

Book announcement

A polyphasic taxonomy of *Daldinia* (*Xylariaceae*). By M. Stadler, T. Læssøe, F. Fournier, D. DeCock, B. Schmieschek, H.-V. Tichy, D. Peršoh. 2014. Studies in Mycology no. 77. CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre, P.O. Box 85176, 3508 AD Utrecht, The Netherlands. <info@cbs.knaw.nl>. Pp. 143, illustr. Price 60 € (paper copy, download free)